

Guidance and Placement Newsletter

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Upcoming Conferences of Note

- ◆ MSCA Fall Conference-Nov 7-9 @ Tan Tar A
- ◆ Building Bridges Conference-Nov 14-16 @ Tan Tar A
- ◆ National ACTE Conference-Dec 9-11, 2004 @ Las Vegas, NV

Director's News

It is hard to believe that I have been on the job for 8 months already. The time seems to be flying by. A major reason for that is the terrific staff with whom I have the privilege to work. John Robbins and Kyle Heislen have been very supportive of the new initiatives we have begun including mentoring, program evaluation, and MSIP reform. John has been working hard at getting 100% participation in our electronic communication system, which he had initiated before I came on board. as well as putting together G & P's internal review document which will assist schools in evaluating their guidance programs. Kyle has been leading the way with our mentoring program and providing representation and leadership in MPA. We have a team approach in all that we do with our main focus being on providing quality assistance and support to school counselors, vocational counselors, and placement specialists across the state.

It has been most rewarding to find the support and encouragement of the entire Division of Career Education. It is clear that the division is staffed with professionals who care about kids as well as adults who seek career related services. It is also a privilege to be able to work with the fine individuals who make up the Division of Career Education.

We have also have had wonderful support from folks "in the field." As a result of your willingness to volunteer, we have had a variety of committees hard at work. We appreciate the efforts of all who have contributed valuable personal and professional time for many projects. A few of the committees with whom we are working include:

Mentoring
Curriculum Revision/Content Writing Evaluation
Career Clusters
State-Wide Guidance Advisory Counselor Educator
Educator/Military Awareness Certification (soon to be organized)
Task Force on High School Reform
Mental Health
Web-based Career Management System.

One of our strengths as a state is the very positive relationships between our local programs, our professional organizations, and DESE. An on-going goal will be to maintain and strengthen these relationships. By working together we can better serve the needs of our kids and our schools. And, with your support and help we will be able to maintain and enhance our position as a state known for developing and implementing effective guidance programs.



“Taking the Road Less Traveled”

School counselors play an important role in eliminating barriers for students interested in pursuing nontraditional careers.

By Mimi Lufkin, Executive Director,
National Alliance for Partnerships in
Equity

Much of this article appeared originally in the ASCA magazine.

Susan spends a lot of time with her dad in his auto repair business and is fascinated by the inner workings of a car engine. She doesn't mind the dirt and grease. It washes off anyway. However, at school, she would really like to take an auto technology course but is afraid that she will be the only girl in the class and will be teased by the boys.

John has always been a caregiver, as the oldest child of eight siblings. His Aunt Jean is a nurse at a local hospital emergency room and has the most exciting stories to tell. John's favorite TV show is *ER*. John has gone with his aunt to observe her work as part of a program at the hospital and finds himself very interested in the field of medicine. He knows there is a health careers program at his school but knows it's only for girls.

Do these scenarios sound familiar to you? As a school counselor, you have a unique opportunity to become an advocate for your students and facilitate the elimination of barriers at your school that stop them from fulfilling their dreams. There are many reasons students choose not to pursue nontraditional careers regardless of their interest. These include:

- Gender-biased career guidance materials and practices, instructional strategies, and curriculum materials

- Limited access to and participation in math, science, and technology
- Lack of nontraditional role models
- Lack of early exposure to nontraditional careers
- Unsupportive school climate, community, and/or family members
- Peer pressure as a result of student attitudes, biases, and stereotypes
- Family demographic characteristics
- Media representation
- Wage potential

Although some of these causes are not under your control as a school counselor, many of them can be eliminated or influenced by your role. Consider implementing some proven strategies that will help the Susans and Johns at your schools take the risk of pursuing a nontraditional career.

In subsequent issues, the following strategies will be discussed:

- Review career guidance materials and practices
- Invite, involve, and educate parents
- Conduct middle school programs
- Provide role models and mentors
- Conduct targeted recruitment activities
- Conduct pre-technical training programs
- Conduct professional development with all teachers at all levels
- Implement and model gender-fair institutional strategies
- Collaborate with community-based organizations

To be continued....

(Note: This and subsequent sections of the article are presented courtesy of Jean Cole, Director of Equity Services at DESE)

“As a school counselor, you have a unique opportunity to become an advocate for your students and facilitate the elimination of barriers at your school that stop them from fulfilling their dreams.”

Mentoring

The 2004-2005 school year marks the initial year for the School Counselor Mentoring Program.

In this program, first and second year school counselors apply through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to be given mentors that will assist them in the day to day activities of the school counselor.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, in conjunction with the Missouri Center for Career Education, has developed a notebook for both protégés and mentors.

This notebook outlines the procedures of the program and the specific requirements involved in participation of the program.

We had our training for mentors and protégés on September 14, 2004 and are anticipating a very successful initial year for this program.

If you would like more information on the School Counselor Mentoring Program, please contact Kyle Heislen at kyle.heislen@dese.mo.gov or call 573-751-6875.

Missouri Counselor Academy-Second Edition

The Missouri School Counselor Academy's mission is to work with counselors statewide to be more consistent in their work on career awareness and career guidance activities with elementary through high school students.

Current plans are to have a several day seminar in June of 2005 to introduce the entities that are involved in planning and participating in the Academy, namely the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Career Education Division and Vocational Rehabilitation Division, the Department of Higher Education, the Department of Workforce Development and CMSU.

Later in the year we will have several regional workshops at sites that will be determined by the locale of the participants, so the participants can meet the local people working at the entities described above. There will then be a third meeting in the spring where everyone will come together to share the successes in the program. This Academy is designed to assist school counselors in the development of resources and expertise in the dissemination of information concerning career awareness; exploration, choice, and having students develop a career plan. This Academy will assist counselors at all grade levels in assisting students to be aware of careers and education needed to succeed in their career decisions.

Electronic Communications

In January of 2004, we began to send most of our communications by e-mail to guidance contacts in districts all across the state of Missouri. Since that time, we have seen the number of districts designating a person as their guidance contact on screen 03 on Core Data grow from less than 50 to over 500 at the present time. We have found that not all counselors in districts with a designated contact are receiving our digests and newsletters.

The reasons for this vary. In some instances we found that the e-mail address was incorrect. In others, counselors were using either hotmail or yahoo accounts which do not usually accept messages that are the size of the digest.

We also heard that occasionally, the messages were not being forwarded as we requested.

If you have not been receiving the e-mails, check first to see who the contact is and see if he or she is receiving them.

If problems persist, please contact us and we will attempt to work with you to make sure you receive future e-mails.

Thanks to all of you for your help in working toward our goal of establishing a viable means of communication with all counselors in the state.

End Notes

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This and subsequent issues of the Guidance and Placement newsletter will be posted on our website. We will inform you via the Guidance Digest when a new issue is posted; plans are to post a new newsletter approximately three times during the school year.

The newsletter will contain information about various programs conducted by the Guidance and Placement Section and other Sections within the Division of Career Education as well as programs and services conducted by other Divisions within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

We will continue to use The Guidance Digest to make information known that is time sensitive so that counselors may be aware of it and act upon it in a timely manner.

The information in the Digest will continue to include grant opportunities, conferences, and other similar matters that might need the knowledge and assistance of both other counselors and administrators within a district in order to be utilized effectively.

Thanks to everyone who has commented on this venture over the past few months.

We will continue to invite feedback and suggestions for issues that you would like to see included in the newsletter.



We're on the Web!

http://www.dese.state.mo.us/divcareered/guidance_placement_index.htm